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THE EDUCATIONAL MUSEUM OF PARIS

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The educational museums of the world now number about half a hundred. Some seven-eighths of these are in Europe, and almost a majority of the number are in Germany, the land of the school-master. These museums are supported by the city, state, or nation, or by a combination of all these agencies; or their maintenance may even be partly drawn from the treasury of some teachers' association. Occasionally they have grown up as memorials to some famous educator, as in the case of the Pestalozzianum in Zürich, the Girard Museum in Fribourg, and the former Comenius-Stiftung in Leipzig; but generally they have been called into being simply as adjuncts to the educational system of a country.

The general purpose of the educational museum is to show the condition of education and schools throughout civilization, to inform teachers and others of recent progress in education, to illustrate the best methods of instruction, and to preserve mementos and writings of the great educators. Through a museum of this kind much is gathered together that could be seen, if at all, only by extensive travel, and is so arranged as to render possible an intelligent comparison.

There is also a growing tendency to make these museums of interest and value to those for whom the schools exist, the pupils themselves. Pedagogues have gradually come to understand that books can afford only second-hand information and should not be exclusively relied upon in instruction. It required the labors of at least four of the world's greatest reformers to make us understand that the pupils' eye, ear, and hand must be brought to serve his mind, but we have learned our lesson well. The child is today encouraged to follow nature in a far deeper sense than Rousseau ever dreamed, and the museum, the laboratory, the workshop, and even the kitchen are now recognized as educational agencies of the most valuable sort.

The new educational museum of the Teachers College in New York has, in particular, demonstrated¹ some of the ways in which educational exhibits may, on this principle of first-hand knowledge, be made to stimulate the mental growth of the children as well as to inform and train their teachers.

The educational museum, then, bears the same relation to the general museum that the library of education does to the general library. The latter in each case may be made of much service to both teacher and pupil, but the collections that have pedagogy alone in view have the advantage of being more exhaustive and requiring less search for what is needed. Museums of this character have long been wanted in this country, and leading educators² and officials have frequently expressed a desire that they should be founded. In this matter the United States has been outstripped by all the other leading nations and by some of her nearer neighbors. In the city of Toronto, Canada, more than half a century ago there was established the first educational museum in history, while it is nearly thirty years since progressive little Japan added this feature to her system of education; and even the South American countries have now been represented for several years by museums at Rio de Janeiro, Montevideo, and Buenos Ayres. Until recently, the only attempt in the United States was made at Washington in 1868, and was soon abandoned for want of support from Congress or any other source. Although a special appeal has often been made by the commissioner of education, the museum has never been revived.

Now, however, that the Teachers College of Columbia University has shown how valuable an institution an educational museum can be made, it may ere long be generally demanded by the teachers and schools throughout this country. One at least may gradually be developed in the capitol or metropolis, or at the chief educational institution of each state, while the four other teachers' colleges of the country, connected respectively with the Universities of Chicago, New York, Missouri, and California, should not be slow to follow

¹ See especially B. R. Andrews, "Possible Values of a School Museum," *Teachers College Record*, May, 1904.

² See "Proceedings of the Department of Superintendence of the National Educational Association for 1881," pp. 57-66.

the lead of Columbia. Meanwhile, some account of the development and management of the leading educational museum in the world, the Musée Pédagogique of Paris, may not be without interest.

Anything French that can elicit commendation from a German educator is likely to be pre-eminent of its kind. It is now some time since the director of the Pedagogical Library of Leipzig said of the similar institution in Paris: "It stands by itself among all the col-



FIG. 1.—The Educational Museum of Paris Musée Pédagogique

lections of pedagogical works in the world, and never fails to arouse the admiration of strangers." Many improvements have taken place in the library and other collections of the Musée Pédagogique since these words of praise were spoken, and the superiority of the Paris institution is more widely acknowledged than ever. Its development, however, though covering but a quarter of a century, has been gradual and fairly steady.

Although Toronto, London, and several of the continental cities antedated Paris in the actual establishment of an educational museum, the first suggestion of such a set of collections was made in a pamphlet

issued by M. Jullien at Paris in 1817. His plan for forming a special commission to collect material concerning the educational systems and institutions of Europe seems, however, to have been somewhat too large and vague to attract any general attention.¹ But the idea did not die. It reappeared in 1831, and in 1867 it took more definite shape through the possibility of making the scholastic exhibits at the Paris Exposition the beginning of a permanent collection. That attempt failed, however, and it was not until 1871 that any collections were made. During that year and the two following, Jules Simon, minister of public instruction, secured a mass of educational documents, but he shortly afterward retired from office, and for almost six years the enterprise was dormant.

In 1879, at the urgency of the famous Buisson, who was at that time one of the primary inspectors, and had published two articles on the feasibility of such a project, Minister Bardoux issued a decree which officially instituted "an educational museum and a central library of primary instruction." Even before the ministerial announcement, however, M. Buisson had been authorized to arrange with the various foreign powers for an exchange of educational objects. These were placed in the Bourbon Palace, the building ordinarily occupied by the French Senate, which, however, was at that time sitting at Versailles. A museum of education was thus at length inaugurated.

The following year, however, the legislature reclaimed its Paris domicile, and the museum was obliged to remove its collections to cramped, unsuitable, and merely temporary quarters in the Collège Rollin. Despite this and the natural difficulties attending the project, great strides were made during the next five years in the equipment and organization of the museum. The first year, through the representations of the ever active Buisson, the splendid collection of pedagogical books belonging to M. Rapet was purchased for the library. This consisted of some 4,000 volumes, which covered practically all the documents and reviews of primary instruction which had ever been issued by France, Germany, Italy, England, and the United States, and of 284 books relating to Pestalozzi and

¹ This description is largely based upon the recent official report, *Le Musée Pédagogique, 1879-1904, historique et régime actuel*, as well as upon personal observation of this and other well-known museums of Europe.

his works, which was a third more in number than had with the greatest pains been collected by that philosopher's native city of Zürich.

During this period also the Musée started its circulating library of educational books for the benefit of those fitting themselves for teachers in the infant, primary, and normal schools. Also the now well-known *Revue Pédagogique* was begun at this time as the special organ of the museum for educational inquiry. The narrow quarters were a very great hindrance, but during these years a beginning was made on the splendid set of relief models and scientific apparatus now owned by the institution, and the first laboratory was established.

Also during this epoch, in 1881, the various collections of the museum were for the first time definitely arranged. They were divided into four sections: (1) plans of school buildings and furnishings; (2) apparatus for instruction; (3) the general library; and (4) books on the history of education; and, with slight modification, this has been the basis of division ever since. Not until three years later was there any catalogue completed. At that time a card catalogue of all the books in the library was prepared, and not long afterward there was arranged a duplicate catalogue in three sections, comprising the pedagogical works, the textbooks, and the books of reference, respectively.

During these years, too, the Musée Pédagogique began its hospitality to committees and associations connected with education, which has ever since been a policy pursued by the administration. At this time several committees on school buildings, pedagogical libraries, geographical, physical, and biological apparatus, which had been appointed by the minister of public instruction, held their meetings at the museum and found there the best possible means for pursuing their inquiries.

In 1885, just as the city found it necessary to take back the Collège Rollin for its own use, a commodious building on the Rue Gay-Lussac most fortunately became vacant, because of the combination of two normal schools, and by ministerial decree was placed at the disposal of the Educational Museum. The Rue Gay-Lussac is a street in the midst of the dingy "Latin quarter" of the city, but, as the name of the section implies, the museum is situated in the vicinity of the most

renowned educational institutions of France. The Sorbonne, College of France, and School of Mines are all within three or four blocks, and the Higher Normal School is just around the corner. Although the building is barely passable in appearance, it has, from the beginning, fitted the needs of the museum exactly. It is larger than the Collège Rollin and well adapted to the installation of the collections.

A plan of arrangement was immediately decided upon, which has, in general, been maintained ever since. On the ground floor were placed the collections mainly of interest to sight seers and transient visitors. These include the school furniture and apparatus, and various special and temporary exhibits. Certain rooms were reserved for conducting examinations and conferences. In the first story were placed the libraries and collections for study, while the rooms of the second story were utilized for duplicates, records, and works in charge of the museum for the time being. The two gardens seemed to have been especially created for the botanical work of the museum.

The decade following the occupation of the new building has been officially recognized as the most active period in the history of the museum. All existing features were greatly enlarged, and many others were added. Among the additions to the library were a collection of pedagogical books bought in Italy at the order of Buisson; several sets of books and atlases given by the publishers after the exposition at Antwerp; and 3,000 volumes presented to the French government by the minister of Uruguay. M. Buisson also persuaded a number of publishers to give their best books for family reading, promising to exhibit them with their price where they could be seen, and thus started "the library of recreation." About the same time, that its scope might not be limited to a mere depository, the museum undertook to publish at irregular intervals a series of "memoirs and scholastic documents" of interest to the different stages of public education. Within a couple of years thirty-four small treatises on a wide range of topics had been issued. They included subjects as far apart as a parliamentary debate on school law, a dissertation on a rare edition of Aristotle's *Physics*, and an account of the New Orleans Exposition. This branch of the work had to be discontinued in 1892 for want of funds, but not until 120 pamphlets had

been issued. Their place has been taken since the union of the Bureau of Information with the Musée Pédagogique two years ago, by the series of publications issued by the bureau.

Also early in this period of development the first two volumes of the general catalogue were printed. The publication consisted of (1) an index of all the books according to their authors; (2) a list of administrative documents of all countries; and (3) a systematic index of the books according to subject-matter. Two years later, again upon the advice of Buisson, there was completed a system of cross-references such that an investigator might, from the name of a man or a country, a special title, or the general subject, find what books and articles on the field he wished to investigate were in the library, and what treatises on the subject had already been published in any language.

During this decade of activity, an effort was made to arrange the objective collections of the museum as systematically as possible, that they might become instructive as well as interesting. The rooms containing the collections for geography and those for mechanical and free-hand drawing from this time forth were more attractive to students than to transient visitors. Among the new exhibits that were added was a collection of copy-books from pupils in the same grades throughout France, that one might compare them and get an idea of the attainments in the average primary school. In a good-sized room of the second story there was also opened an exhibition of needle-work done by the young women in the normal and upper primary grades. This exhibit, which consists mostly of dolls dressed in the costumes of all parts of France and other countries, has always attracted a large number of curious visitors. On one Thursday, which is the exhibition day of the museum, the writer found that no less than half a dozen different countries were represented among those visiting this interesting collection.

During these years one entirely new function was assumed by the museum. Conferences were opened under the direction of distinguished educators, to assist candidates in preparing for positions in the primary and normal schools, and for primary inspectorships. These conferences, in which the greatest freedom of discussion prevailed, were of immense benefit, and were greatly appreciated.

The museum also continued to offer the use of its rooms to various commissions and societies. Examinations of teachers and pupils for admission to the normal schools were conducted here, and in this place also were founded the Society for the Protection of Children, the Society for the Prevention of Child Mendicants, as well as the famous Anglo-French Guild, which was instituted for the benefit of French teachers of English.

As a result of all this progress, by the end of the decade, in 1895, the Educational Museum of Paris was well known in other countries. It had made exhibits at all the large expositions of the period—New Orleans, Paris, Chicago, and Lyons—and had been praised by prominent men in many lands. It was everywhere recognized as the leading institution of its kind in the world.

While the museum had been extending its service in so many directions, its annual income did not increase correspondingly, but remained at the fixed appropriation of 40,000 francs. Most of this sum was by 1895 consumed in paying the various officers and employees that had become necessary. For this reason, during the next eight years it was impossible to extend the work of the museum in any direction where a new expenditure would be required.

Even with this condition of affairs, some progress was made. In 1896 two educational societies gave their entire collections of stereopticon views to the museum, that they might be used in popular conferences and for the education of adults. That it might entail no expenditure, on the part of the museum to operate this new feature, one of the societies even guaranteed the expenses of transporting the views to the different centers, and of repairing any views damaged in use or transportation. Also through the Paris Exposition of 1900, as had been the case in 1878 and 1889, the museum was greatly enriched by various educational objects from foreign lands, and it now became necessary to construct a special room to contain them.

By 1903, however, it was evident that the museum could not perform its best service as long as it was so financially restricted, and that it must give up one of two things, both of which had contributed greatly to its prestige—its publications or its conferences. Some increase in its income was imperative, if its usefulness were not to be permanently crippled. This demand was supplied in March, 1903, through the combination of the museum with the Bureau of Information and Studies.

This Bureau of Information had been established two years before as a division of the ministry of public instruction, but with considerable authority of its own. Its functions, which had been somewhat undefined by the decree which established it, were limited by the director to two chief duties: (1) to unite, classify, and catalogue the scattered official documents that would explain the school administration of France to a stranger; and (2) to start substantial investigations on educational problems of the day, and publish the results in monograph form. Its union with the museum effected an economy and strengthened both institutions. Each possessed what the other lacked; the bureau had all the recent literature of education, which the museum had been unable to procure, while the museum had on its staff the trained specialists that were needed to push the investigations desired by the bureau.

To summarize this account of the features, which have so gradually developed, we may group the divisions of the Educational Museum of Paris under five heads. Three of these are separate departments—the library, the bureau, and the museum; while two auxiliary services—the stereopticon views and the statistical documents—have been associated with them. Their present condition is as follows:

1. *Library*.—The combined libraries now contain nearly 75,000 volumes and pamphlets. The educational museums at St. Petersburg, South Kensington (London), and Leipzig probably possess more works, but as their books were largely acquired by gift, they are not nearly as select or serviceable. As might be gathered from the preceding account of the various accessions, nearly every department of education has now come to be represented in the Paris institution by something more than a working library.

The entire library, pedagogical and otherwise, may be classified under four heads—reserved books, general works, official documents, and periodicals. This does not include the manuscripts, which are in another room. The circulating library is also kept separate. It is now sent to teachers in all parts of France. The books are forwarded and returned post-free, may be kept for two months, and then renewed without difficulty. This traveling library now consists of three classes of works—literary, scientific, and pedagogical.

The general catalogue will probably never be printed again, as the library is too large and growing too rapidly, but catalogues of

special collections and of the circulating library will be issued from time to time. The general catalogue is written out in some forty large volumes, which may be indefinitely extended. The cross-references, as already seen, are so complete that one has little difficulty in securing all possible material upon any subject he desires.

2. *Bureau*.—This department, which is now known as “the office,” is in charge of Dr. V. H. Friedel, who is a specialist in pedagogy and speaks fluently all the leading modern languages. In a most courteous way he furnishes information, or points out appropriate literature to anyone upon the system of education in France or any other educational subject. From this department have already been issued six important monographs, three of them having been completed before its union with the museum. These publications take the place of the former “Memoirs,” and are known as the second series of publications of the museum.

3. *Museum*.—With the exception of the collections of instructional apparatus at St. Petersburg, the museum proper in Paris now contains the most complete exhibit of educational objects in the world. Although much time has been given to arranging them, these exhibits are not even yet as well organized as the systematic collections of the excellent museum in Brussels or the more modest material of the Teachers College in New York or the Pestalozzianum in Zürich.

The collections of the Musée Pédagogique may be catalogued as follows: (*a*) the foreign room; constructed for objects obtained from the exposition of 1900; (*b*) the French room, containing the work of teachers and pupils; (*c*) and (*d*) two rooms in which publishers may deposit any of their articles save books; (*e*) a room filled with apparatus for teaching the mathematical and physical sciences; (*f*) a cabinet of natural history; (*g*) and (*h*) two rooms containing models for drawing and the work of the pupils in this line; (*i*) a room of geographical apparatus; (*j*) a room filled with pictures of school buildings, plans, etc.; (*k*) a room containing the exhibit of needle-work and the dolls dressed in the costumes of all countries.

4. *Statistics*.—The documents of this department relate mostly to the lectures for adults, the conferences, and the inquiries into popular education in general. Here anyone who desires to found an educational work of any sort can learn the conditions under which

similar organizations were created. All the documents in the office of the minister of education and in the library of the museum have been transferred to this auxiliary department. Although it is meeting with constant additions, it is kept carefully classified.

5. *Stereopticon views*.—The patronage of this branch of the museum's work has now been so enlarged as to include not only teachers, but also military officers of the various barracks. The various sets of views now make in all about 35,000 trips annually.

The present director of the Musée Pédagogique, Dr. Charles V. Langlois, was formerly in charge of the Bureau of Information, and upon its consolidation with the museum, was transferred, together with his associate, Dr. Friedel, to the new organization. He is a polished gentleman and scholar, having until four years ago been an assistant professor in the University of Paris. What he and Dr. Friedel have already accomplished for the Educational Museum of Paris marks a service second only to that rendered by the distinguished Buisson in the early days.

With so large-minded an administration, it is not surprising that the museum, besides the five functions mentioned above, continues the policy of hospitality. It throws wide its doors to conferences and meetings of different scientific and professional societies. Among the most recently received are the Society of Child Psychology, the International Society of Pedagogical Studies, and the Association of Modern Language Professors. Feeling that the museum should be the official residence of actual teachers as well as of those in embryo, the authorities have taken the initiative and called conferences of the students and professors of Paris, to consider questions of method and professional interest. Thus the Musée Pédagogique not only furnishes the means for broadening the minds and elevating the ideals of the teachers of the capital and the entire country, and welcomes to its privileges as well any educators from foreign countries, but it also strives to bind together all the teachers of France and secure greater recognition for the profession everywhere.

Such is the leading museum of education in the world. Does it not contain many features that might be made of value to our educational system? Of course, any foreign institution, however suggestive, cannot be imported bodily, but must be adapted, if it is to contain

aught of good, to the genius and needs of our people. It may be, too, as has been the case with many ideas we have borrowed, that we shall be able to improve upon the original.

The experiments of our one educational museum, that in New York, would seem to indicate the truth of both these propositions. There has been no need of adding to its functions special conferences to prepare teachers, nor of maintaining a library, as these departments are already well managed by the Teachers College; and, as stated at the outset of this article, the museum in New York has already gone farther than the great Musée of Paris in making its collections of value to the school children themselves, and in finding by careful experimentation where the true usefulness of such an institution may lie.

We should not forget, however, that the chief reason for the marvelous development of the Musée Pédagogique has been the profound belief and the genuine interest in its usefulness of all the great educators and statesmen of France. If our own prominent men could, regardless of political creed, be brought to a similar interest, every large city of this land would contain an educational museum doing at least as valuable a work as that in Paris.